

REMARKS

Claims 1-51 remain pending in the application.

The pending claims stand rejected as being unpatentable over Pierrat (6,162,568), or Pierrat (6,558,854) in view of Nakagawa (5,276,551). Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of such rejections.

Referring initially to claim 1, such recites a method of converting a reticle from a first configuration suitable for attenuation and approximately 180° phase-shifting of a later generation (shorter wavelength) photolithography radiation to a second configuration suitable for attenuation and approximately 180° phase-shifting of an earlier generation (longer wavelength) photolithography radiation. The claim further recites that the method includes reducing a thickness of a portion of a substantially radiation-transmissive substrate of the reticle.

The Examiner's cited references show that it was known in the art that modifying a thickness of a portion of a substantially radiation-transmissive substrate of a reticle would modify phase-shifting properties of the reticle. The references do not suggest the claim 1 recited utilization of such modification to convert a reticle from being suitable for utilization for a later generation photolithography radiation to a configuration suitable for attenuation of an earlier generation photolithography radiation.

The Examiner recognizes this distinction between the teachings of the cited references and the recitations of claim 1, and accordingly indicates on page 6 of the Office Action that applicant is adjusting a mask for different reasons than the teachings of the art.

The Examiner goes on to state, however, that the teachings for modification of a mask between the cited references and the recitations of claim 1 are otherwise the same except for the claim 1 recited reason for the modifications. The implication from this statement of the Examiner is that the claim 1 recited reasons for modification of a reticle (in other words, the claim 1 recited conversion of the reticle from a configuration suitable for a later generation photolithography radiation to a configuration suitable for an earlier generation photolithography radiation) is not sufficient to confer patentability even though such recitation is not taught by the cited references.

Applicant respectfully submits that the claim 1 recited methodology can create specific advantages which are not recognized by the prior art. For instance, paragraph 0033 of the specification states that one of the advantages achievable by methodology encompassed by claim 1 is that the reticle formed through the claim 1 recited conversion can have an increased amount of transmission through out-of-phase regions relative to a in-phase regions, and paragraph 0054 of the specification further explains that such increased transmission can allow converted reticles formed in accordance with aspects of the present invention to have advantages during photolithographic processing which could not be achieved with the reticles prior to the conversion.

The cited references do not recognize this advantage or any other advantage for converting reticles suitable for utilization with later generation photolithography radiation to configurations suitable for earlier generation photolithography radiation in accordance with the recited aspects of claim 1. There is thus no motivation within the prior art for combining

the cited references to create the claimed 1 recited method. Applicant therefore respectfully submits that claim 1 is allowable over the cited combination of references, and accordingly requests such allowance in the Examiner's next Action.

Claims 2-16 depend from claim 1, and are therefore allowable for least the reasons discussed above regarding claim 1, as well as for their own recited features which are neither shown or suggested by the cited references.

Referring next to claim 17, such claim, like the above-discussed claim 1, recites a method for converting a reticle from a first configuration suitable for a shorter wavelength radiation to a second configuration suitable for a longer wavelength of radiation. Claim 17 is therefore allowable for reasons similar to those discussed above regarding claim 1, and applicant therefore respectfully requests formal allowance of claim 17 in the Examiner's next action.

Claims 18-36 depend from claim 17, and are therefore allowable for least the reasons discussed above regarding claim 17.

Referring next to claim 37, such claim, similarly to the above-discussed claim 1, recites a method for converting a reticle from a first configuration suitable for one wavelength of radiation to a second configuration suitable for a different wavelength of radiation. Claim 37 is therefore allowable for reasons similar to those discussed above regarding claim 1, and applicant therefore respectfully requests formal allowance of claim 37 in the Examiner's next action.

Claims 38-44 depend from claim 37, and therefore allowable for least the reasons discussed above regarding claim 37.

Referring next to claim 45, such claim, like the above-discussed claim 1, recites a method for converting a reticle from a first configuration suitable for a shorter wavelength of radiation to a second configuration suitable for a longer wavelength radiation. Claim 45 is therefore allowable for reasons similar to those discussed above regarding claim 1, and applicant therefore respectfully requests formal allowance of claim 45 in the Examiner's next action.

Claims 46-51 depend from claim 45, and are therefore allowable for least the reasons discussed above regarding claim 45.

Pending claims 1-51 are allowable for reasons discussed above, and applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner's next action be a Notice of Allowance formally allowing claims 1-51.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: 

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